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## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

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### A CASE FOR FREE IMPORTS.

THE reader need not be alarmed or curious in the belief that this is to prove an interesting statistical paper. Nothing of the kind! The free imports spoken of are not even raw material used in the world's manufactures. The chief article indeed which might be freed from duty is a thing which is sentient enough never to ask for such treatment, because it has conscience enough to rejoice in any duty put upon it. Whether you can import it or not, or whether you would wish to have it free, must be judged after you hear of the extent of the prevalence of the thing in England.

The thing to which I allude is the public performance of public duty free of the acceptance of public money. It is the doing of labor for love. Is love's labor lost? That is being asked nowadays when people wish to pay small salaries and have the energies of the salaried wholly at their call. Public work done for nothing means the employment of men who are a little independent, and independence is not always considered an individual, although it may be deemed a national, virtue. No; professional politicians say politics, and all avocations of man influenced by politics—and what is there that is not influenced by them?—should be undertaken by the servants of the public; and how can a man be a real servant unless he accept pay, and does exactly as his master tells him? How can a country with such old-fangled ideas as those involved in an unpaid House of Representatives fail to be constantly proving itself wofully behind the times? Fancy a whole chamber of representatives presuming to represent a public gratuitously! Fancy legislators who do not receive mileage money! The thing must surely be an enormity. Sovereigns are the first servants of their people; where each citizen is a sovereign the dollars should be paid to their servants, the delegates. Where these receive no pay the sovereignty of the citizens can hardly be properly acknowledged.

The late Lord Bramwell, in speaking at a public dinner of the work of a colleague, said that he "had labored as only men do in this country when they receive no pay." The observation was just, for much is done by citizens who "work like niggers," as the expression was in old slavery days, without the "keep" the negro enjoyed in unlimited food. The Commons are now certainly asking for "commons," that is their keep, a very reasonable request according to American ideas. But it must be remembered that there are not so many men in many of the United States who can afford, as "men of leisure," to give time to public affairs, as there are in England. In the island kingdom there are thousands who have little occupation but the life of club and society. It is not a reproach in England to say of a man

that he has no profession, as it certainly and most wholesomely is in America. But the leisured folk in Britain have given much of their time to the public. Nor is it a case where Demos can say, "Thank you for nothing." The practice has spared Demos much money, and has been largely instrumental in securing impartiality and independence in the conduct of affairs. Although in the days of Lord North and King George town constituencies and rural votes were largely bought, yet the members of Parliament were themselves free in general from any suspicion of being bribed, and the habit of gratuitous public service has rendered the constituencies and the House far purer in England and Scotland than in most countries. No one dreams of being able to "get at" a chairman of committees, nor can a millionaire influence votes in the House by the use of money. Can this be said elsewhere? The well to be pure must have pure sources, and the sources in Britain are pure. The action of rural persons undertaking to be justices of the peace, or members of county councils, without pay, throws upon them a vast amount of travelling and hard work for which they receive—estimation and respect? Hardly. They sacrifice their comfort and often also their health in undertaking duties which are well performed by them without fee or reward. You may say that "position" and power, or the love of these, is at the bottom of this action. All human action is alloyed, but if you get gold of 18 carats are you not satisfied, and do you not prefer it to some metal that gets easily dirty as the coin which is composed of it passes from hand to hand? If you can tempt men by the bribery of honor, it is better to do so, than to attract them only by the bait of an often insufficient pay.

But the culminating instance showing to what an extent the reliance on voluntary service is placed lies in the case of the high-sheriff. The high-sheriff of an English county was a very useful, and still is a very ornamental, officer. Let us see how different in different parts of our Anglo-Saxon world the duties performed by a sheriff are. In the West he may be obliged to summon his *posse*, and, at the head of the improvised forces of order, pursue armed men and conduct, if not a battle royal, a battle republican on behalf of justice. But in the old land the sheriff's utmost duty in case of the non-arrival of the proper officer would be to see that a condemned man was decently hung. The American has fair pay and little rank. The Englishman has no pay and great rank. During his tenure of office he has precedence over every one. But note the advantage to the public derived from the habit of rendering free service. The public require the high-sheriff to pay for all the dignity of representation of justice. He must "run the show" for them. He has to engage gorgeously appareled footmen, a grandly decorated coachman, and, more expensive still, fine horses and a first-rate carriage, besides, in many cases, halberdiers and other servants, to make the people admire the judges whose servant he is! Yes, he is the mere lacquey of the judges whom he must attend on circuit, who are hardly supposed to speak to their gorgeous slave! He is named for all this service, and, when named, must perform it. If he declines, or runs away, or sends word that he is yachting in the Mediterranean, or "malingerers" in any way, he is forthwith fined £500. The office only lasts one year, so that this heavy impost is levied on many in each county. Yet there is little grumbling and very little shirking. It is considered an honor—an honor to serve the public, and pay for the public, instead of being paid by them. But the further consideration of the glory and martyrdom of high-sheriffs is too touching and overwhelming to the feelings to be longer dwelt upon; suffice

it to ask the question : Is not a British high-sheriff raw material worth introducing into the United States duty free? He would add color to the national life, and would cost nothing.

LORNE.

#### TOO MANY CHILDREN.

MANY of the agencies for lessening pauperism are afraid of tracing back its growth to the frequency of births under wretched conditions. One begins to question whether after all sweet charity or dignified philanthropy has not acted with an unwise reticence; whether, instead of courses in literature and theology, college settlements and missionaries should not have taught the unemployed the relation between births and pauperism. Yet both social and national life to-day recognize the direct relation of morality and one of its phases, personal purity, to political economy, a relationship which is more and more comprehended owing to the increasing development of ethics, sociology, and science. Among the problems which defy practical handling this is the most complicated. Yet it is the bottom reason why there is a child-problem to solve, why child-labor complements adult labor, and why churches offer so little consolation to the unchurched, for the churches assume that the pauperism in marriage is justifiable, while that of illegitimacy is criminal. The pauperism which arises from marriage is the result of the worst elements of character legalized. In America, where the boundaries of wedlock are practically boundless, it is not desirable, even were it possible, that the state should regulate marriage much further than it now does; therefore must the sociologist turn for aid to society in his struggle with pauperism.

Society should insist upon the right spiritual and physical conditions for birth. It should be considered more than a "pity" when another child is born into a home too poor to receive it. The underlying selfishness of such an event should be recognized, for it brings motherhood under wrong conditions of health and money. Instead of each birth being the result of mature consideration and hallowed love, children too often are born as animals are born. To be sure the child has a father whom he can call by name. Better that there had never been a child.

No one hesitates to declare that it is want of self-respect and morality which brings wrong results outside of marriage, but it is also the want of them which begets evil inside the marriage relation. Though there is nothing more difficult than to find the equilibrium between self-respect and self-sacrifice, yet on success in finding it depends individual and national preservation. The fact of being wife and mother or husband and father should imply dignity and joyousness, no matter how humble the home. Because it is difficult for society to make the unskilled adult equal to the skilled adult in morality, society is trying to-day, first by organization and co-operation, and secondly by teaching, to produce the true value of purity in its relation to the government and the individual, that neither the family nor the state should be overrun by children whose parents are not competent to care for them?

In regard to teaching, the difficulties are great. As soon as one advances beyond the simplest subjects of hygiene, one is met with the difference of opinion among physicians. When each one has his favorite way of making a mustard plaster, no wonder that each has his own notions about everything else. One doctor recommends frequent births, another advises against them.